

Susan Carbin-Hardee



COURTESY OF SUSAN CARBIN-HARDEE

Ask yourself how you want to contribute to the world and make a plan that keeps your passion ignited, even if it will take you decades to get there.

Susan Carbin-Hardee says the human body is her life's work. With a graduate degree in body-mind psychology, 30 years of massage therapy practice and a lifelong interest in dance, movement and yoga, the founder of Embodi Health & Wellness in Brattleboro, Vermont (www.embodi.com), has stepped onto a new path with certification in KMI Structural Integration.

How do you define success?

A: When clients write poems or letters to me, or simply thank me deeply because they have been so moved by our work together, I am reminded of the power of this work. I spend my days making a meaningful difference in the lives of others, and in that way we both succeed.

How did you decide this was the right career?

A: I came to massage therapy kind of sideways. In 1980, I was just out of college and traveling around the U.S. when I noticed a buzz about massage on the West coast. Being a body person, I felt pulled, even though I was planning to go to graduate school for psychology. I found the Bancroft School of Massage Therapy when I returned home to Massachusetts, got certified without expecting to make a career of it, and went straight into my graduate studies.

After graduate school, I worked as a body-mind psychotherapist in a hospital in the Boston area. When I got married and moved to the Brattleboro area, I had to make a hard choice: psychotherapy or massage therapy. I decided I am a little bit more body than mind, so I knew massage therapy was the right career for me. Doors, virtual and real, opened up effortlessly for me once I made that decision, and it has been

lovely. The best part? I have never had a bad day at work.

What is the best business decision you have made?

A: My website and e-newsletter have both been very satisfying and great for business. In a clear and attractive way, I can say "this is me," and because I like to write, I get something fun out of it, too.

What advice can you offer regarding career longevity?

A: Stay fresh by learning constantly. I try to integrate what I'm learning into my current repertoire in a creative way that serves the vision I have of myself as a bodywork professional. Incorporating movement, such as yoga and therapeutic exercise, into my sessions and into client homework satisfies the mover in me.

Also, ask yourself how you want to contribute to the world and make a plan that keeps your passion ignited, even if it will take you decades to get there. Patience can be key if you encounter life obstacles that frustrate your progress.

Regarding physical longevity, I limit the number of sessions in either massage therapy or structural integration I do in a day to four. That is my secret, and it has served me well for all these years.

What three suggestions do you have for business success?

A: First, keep your practice small enough to remember the details about the people and events that are important to your clients. I want my clients to feel seen and cared about and to know they matter to me.

Next, bring leadership to your practice. Have a vision for the health possibilities of your clients, and be instrumental in facilitating their awareness of options. Work with them, not on them, so that they own the changes themselves for more permanent integration.

Also, maintain excellent boundaries, but also offer a generosity of spirit in your encounters with the wonderful people who move through your practice. Want the best for them whether they continue to schedule with you or with someone else. If you radiate that kind of sentiment, clients will want to be in your presence. **M**



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